

This Week in Congress

November 6, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Remembering the Life of Lance Corporal Seth Algrim of Garden City

This morning I joined the family and friends of Lance Corporal Seth Algrim for funeral services at the First United Methodist Church in Garden City. Seth served in the Marines for more than three years. His service took him to both Iraq and Afghanistan where he served our country well, protecting our freedom. On October 30, Seth died during Marine training exercises at

Camp Pendleton in California.

His commitment and success as a soldier is a humbling example to all Americans. The loss of this young man is felt throughout our communities and by those he served with. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Algrim family on the loss of Seth. He will not be forgotten.

DHS Responds to Proposed Changes of Kansas County Treasurers Issuing Licenses

In response to my inquiries, I received word this week from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding the ability of county treasurers in Kansas to continue issuing and renewing driver's licenses.

In the written response, DHS states that it does not expect to dictate what entities within a state are allowed to issue a driver's license or identification card. DHS writes that if county treasurers in Kansas can meet minimum security standards, the state may continue issuing and renewing licenses in the manner that best suits Kansans.

We have passed the first hurdle. It is good to see that DHS plans to allow the state to decide what is best for Kansans. I will continue to be in contact with DHS officials as they determine the specifics of these standards.

Month of October Pushes Correspondence Over 25,000 for the Year

Kansans have done a great job of keeping me informed during my time in Congress. Kansans share their concerns with me by email, phone calls, faxes and letters. So far this year, Kansans have sent 25,234 pieces of correspondence and I hope they keep coming. Hearing from you helps me cast informed votes and shapes my priorities. If you would like to send me an email message please do so through my website by clicking [here](#) or use the contact information listed below to call or write.

Visiting with Kansas Students

This week, I enjoyed continuing to visit with high school senior government classes. I was at Southeast of Saline High School in Gypsum with Rex Cooper's class, Washington at Washington High School with Kent Mailen's class, and Belleville at Republic County High School with Alan Sheets' class.

Visiting Kansas Health Care Facilities

I also continued visiting health care facilities throughout the district this week. I was in Herington to visit the Herington Municipal Hospital and meet with Administrator Mary Steiner. In Mankato, I stopped at Jewell County Hospital where I met with Administrator Deanna Freeman. It was a good opportunity to get an update on activities and challenges at each facility.

Visiting Kansas Communities

Salina: On Monday, I met with representatives from the Kansas Rural Center, the Kansas Organic Producers Association and the Kansas Catholic Conference to discuss policy issues in light of the 2007 Farm Bill. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Dan Nagengast, Harry Bennett, Paul Johnson, Ed Reznicek, Herb Bartel, Jim Keating, Mary Fund and Sherrie Mahoney. Also that day, I spoke to the Salina Noon Optimist Club. Several area high school students were in attendance. Thanks to Dr. Underbakke and the other Optimists from Concordia for attending. Also, thanks to Senator Vidricksen and Jeff Bachman for hosting me. On Friday, I visited Crestwood Cabinets where I toured the kitchen demonstration and production areas with President Mike Junk and founder Paul Junk. Crestwood Cabinets employs about 230 area residents and is a manufacturer of fine custom cabinetry and related wood products. I also stopped at Sunflower Bank to welcome Don Lamb as the new Senior Vice President of the bank. It was good to see Mollie Hale Carter and other Sunflower employees as well as many of Don's friends that stopped by.

Council Grove: This week, I made stops in Council Grove to visit Morris County Hospital and other local offices to visit with area residents. At Morris County Hospital, I met with CEO James Reagan for a tour of the facility and discussion about health care issues like laboratory reimbursement and critical access designation. I also made stops at the Morris County Courthouse, City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, the office of Attorney Randall Heilman, and The Apothecary.

Pratt: I spent time in Pratt this week visiting the Gateway Ethanol facility and the High Plains Cotton Gin. Construction on the Gateway Ethanol facility began in January. Upon completion, it will produce 40 million gallons of ethanol annually and employ more than 30 people. I enjoyed meeting with Lane Hamm, Chief Financial Officer, and others about this project. At High Plains Cotton Gin, I toured the facility and met with Roger Sewell, Manager of Business Development, and some of the local owners of the facility. I enjoyed learning about this local operation and seeing the facility in full swing during one of their busiest times of the year.

Greensburg: I visited the community of Greensburg this week and made stops at the local Rotary meeting, United Methodist Church, Southern Plains Coop, Kiowa County Farm Bureau, Greensburg State Bank, Kiowa County Courthouse, Kiowa County Library and Greensburg Tractor. I enjoyed my time visiting with area residents.

Great Bend: At the Great Bend Senior Center, I presented about a dozen local volunteers with the Lifetime President Volunteer Service Award. This program recognizes individuals, families and groups that have served a certain number of hours over a 12-month period or the course of a lifetime and is a way to thank and honor them for their volunteer service.

Hutchinson: On Thursday, I enjoyed visiting with the youth who attend the Boys & Girls Club of Hutchinson. I was invited to personally accept the handmade "Lights on Afterschool" light bulbs that each of the participating youth made to remind me of the opportunity the club provides for area youth. Along with the kids, I was pleased to visit with Chief Professional Officer Skip Wilson and his staff, Lance Patterson, Amanda Buoy and Nathan Shelton. I also appreciated meeting Carl Cohen, Program Counselor for Kansas Kids @ Gear Up, a program which enables foster children to improve their social and educational outcomes.

Hays: On Friday, I spoke at the 2006 Ag Outlook Conference at Fort Hays State University. The conference is sponsored by the FHSU Department of Agriculture and is an opportunity for producers and students to learn about agricultural issues facing our nation. As the luncheon speaker, I discussed the outlook for disaster assistance, my top priority for return of Congress in November. The next farm bill and crop insurance issues were also among the topics I spoke about. This conference is a great way for producers in western Kansas to keep informed about the issues that affect their industry. On Sunday, I attended the All American Breakfast at the American Legion Hall.

Ellsworth: On Friday evening, I traveled to Ellsworth to attend the Ellsworth County Hospital Bazaar and Spaghetti Supper at the American Legion Hall.

Wakefield: This weekend, I stopped in Wakefield to attend the Lions Club Annual Pancake

Feed at the Farm Museum. I enjoyed my time in Wakefield visiting with area residents

Junction City: I also participated in Junction City's Veteran Appreciation Parade on Saturday. The parade was sponsored by the Junction City and Geary County Military Affairs Council to honor veterans and celebrate the return of the Big Red One to Fort Riley. Fort Riley Chief of Staff Col. Walter Gilliam served as the grand marshal. Others participating in the parade included the Commanding General's Mounted Color Guard, the 1st Infantry Division Band and other Fort Riley soldiers.

Concordia: Pawnee Mental Health in Concordia is celebrated its 50th Anniversary this weekend. I enjoyed stopping by Sunday during the Open House.

Cuba: St. Isadora's Catholic Church Parish in Cuba held its Annual Turkey Dinner on Sunday. I enjoyed the friendly members of this community while attending the dinner.

In the Office

Reverend Edward Fellhauer and Reverend Sheila Fellhauer of Salina were in my office this week representing the Saint Francis Academy to visit about Medicaid reimbursement. Also stopping by to say hello were Gary and Glennys Doane of Downs.

Several Kansans stopped by my Washington, D.C., office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol building, including Duane and Becky Hatfield of Hutchinson, Donald Shafer of Emporia, and Mike and Peggy Moore of Hays. Sue Parmer of Great Bend stopped by with her son, Sheldon, of Texas, as did Ellis and Janice Rewerts of Leoti with their daughter, Lisa Hahn, and her fiancée, Troy Ruda, of Virginia. Also in were Mo Kashefipour of Overland Park with his sister-in-laws Masoudeh Ziaeeian and Zore Ziaeeian.